



ETA  
CONFERENCE  
2008

RUN, LOLA, RUN IN DISTINCTIVELY VISUAL



| Mark O'Sullivan, Good Samaritan Catholic College

# Run, Lola, Run

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## BOS Rubric

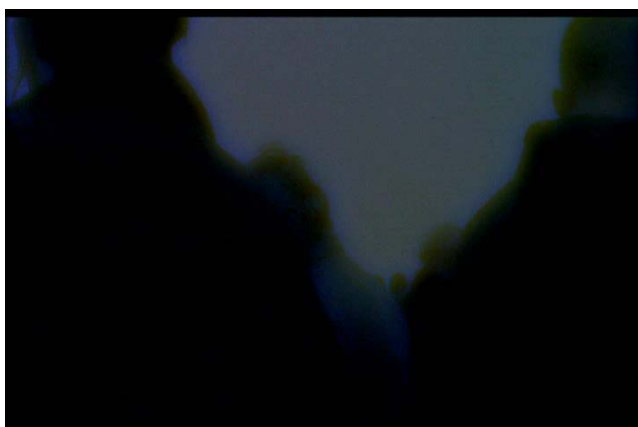
*In their responding and composing students explore the ways the **images we see** and/or **visualise** in texts are created. Students consider how the **forms and language** of different texts **create these images**, **affect interpretation** and **shape meaning**. Students examine one prescribed text, in addition to other texts providing examples of the distinctively visual.*

### Part 1 – The Introduction

The Opening Titles of Run, Lola, Run establish a set of questions that will frame the rest of the film. They also act to introduce the core motifs of the film – time and the fixed tyranny of that time; people living their lives oblivious to others' torments; the physical motion of Lola's journey, demonstrated in animated form; the vigour of Lola's character; the philosophical bent of the security guard.

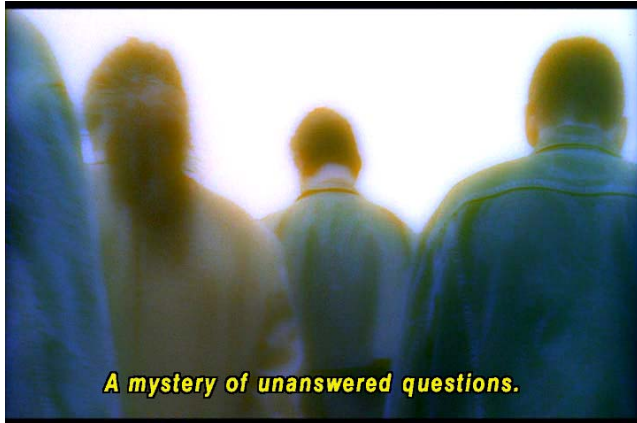


The fixed tyranny of Time



The shadowy, grainy, filtered images of people drifting through life, unaware of the lives of others. This scene also asks the philosophical questions about destiny.

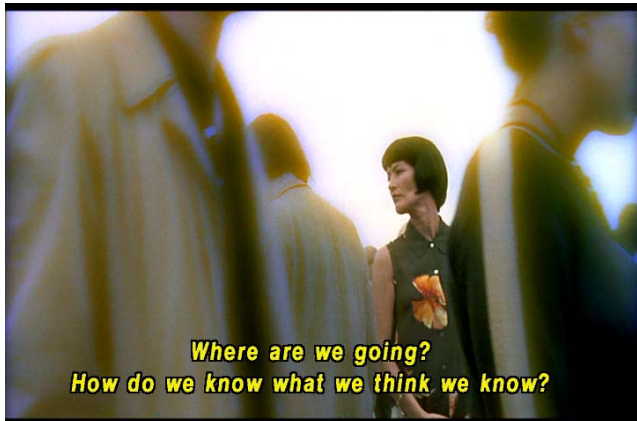




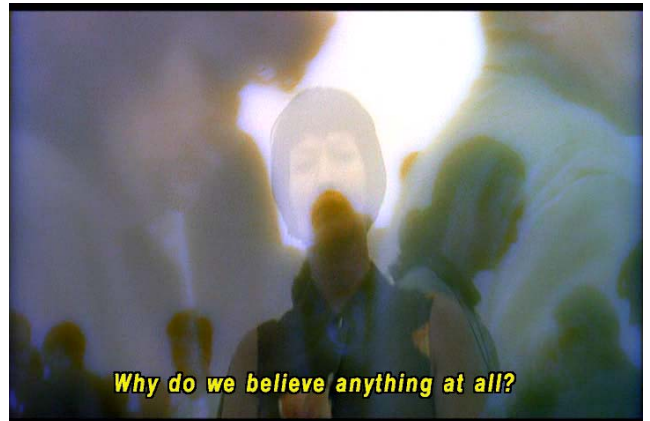
*A mystery of unanswered questions.*



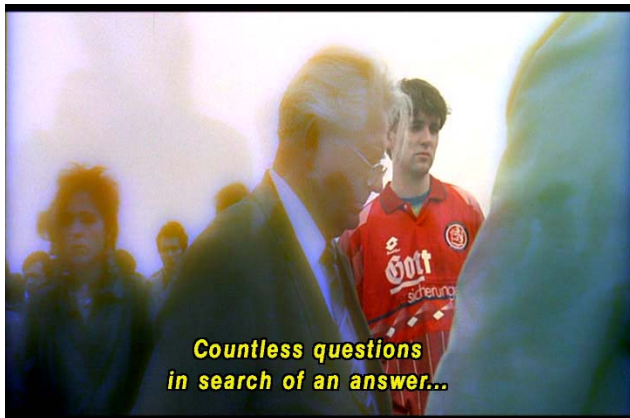
*Who are we?  
Where do we come from?*



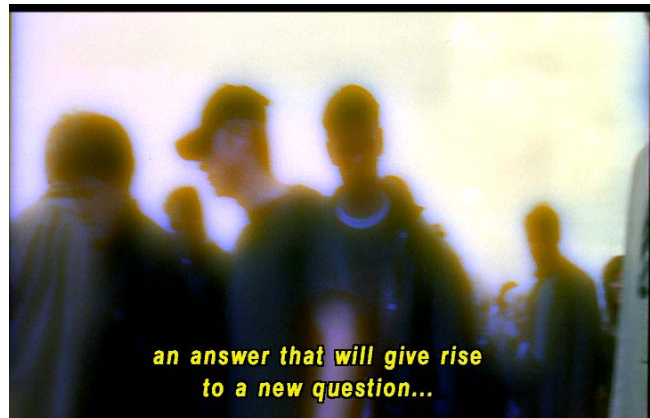
*Where are we going?  
How do we know what we think we know?*



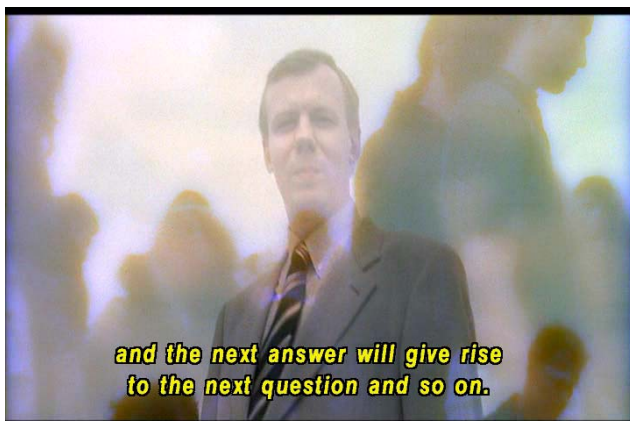
*Why do we believe anything at all?*



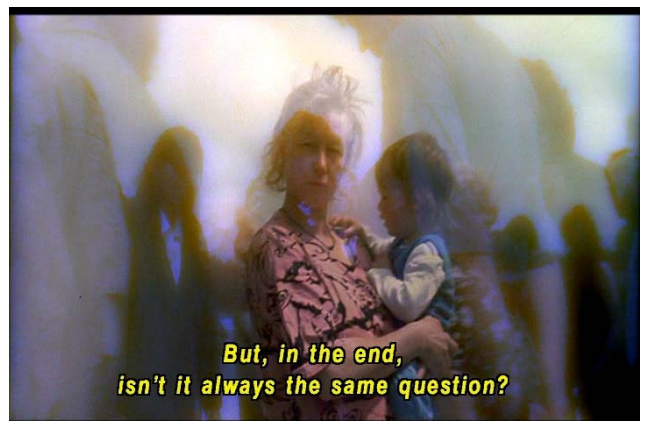
*Countless questions  
in search of an answer...*



*an answer that will give rise  
to a new question...*



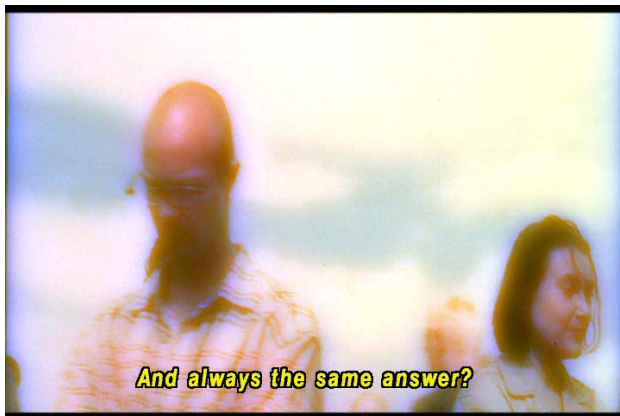
*and the next answer will give rise  
to the next question and so on.*



*But, in the end,  
isn't it always the same question?*



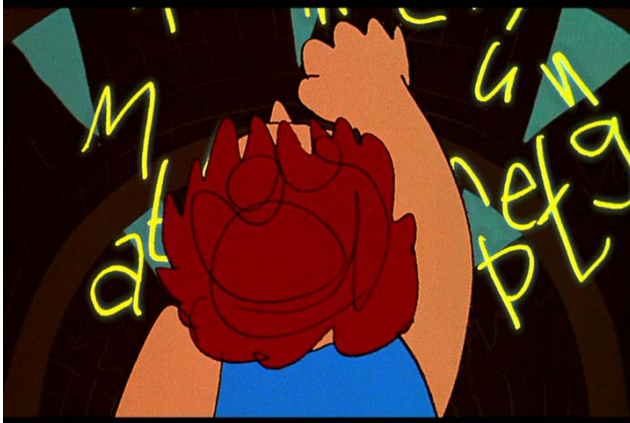
And then comes the puncturing of the possible pretentiousness of these philosophical questions.



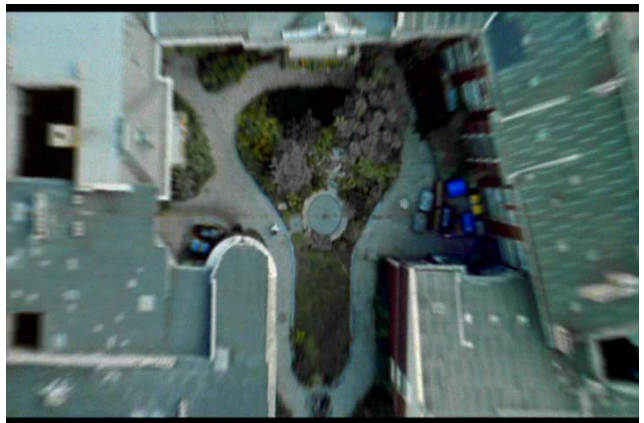
The soccer metaphor dovetails with the concept of flowing movement and non-stop action of the story. It then flows into the first animated section, which helps to heighten Lola's determination as a character







And then we have the bird-eye view establishing shots, taking us from looking at the world from the outside, sweeping us into the story. We also see the powerful, dangerous, passionate red.

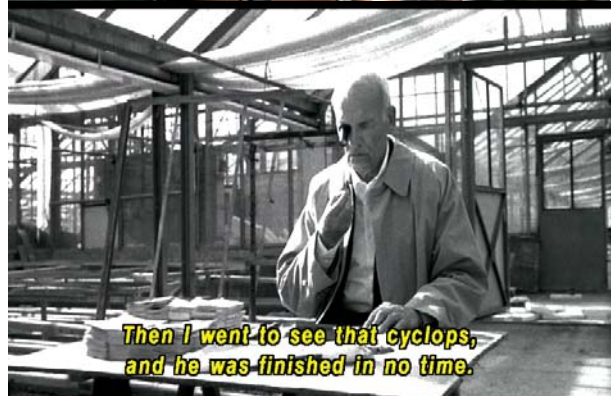




We then have fairly standard criminal deal-gone-wrong story that is at the centre of the film. We also see Manni's submissive, self-flagellating role in the relationship as well as Lola's role as the more assertive, organised one. Manni is also demonstrating a passive/aggressive stance with his facial expressions.



Note the black and white pictures for the past.



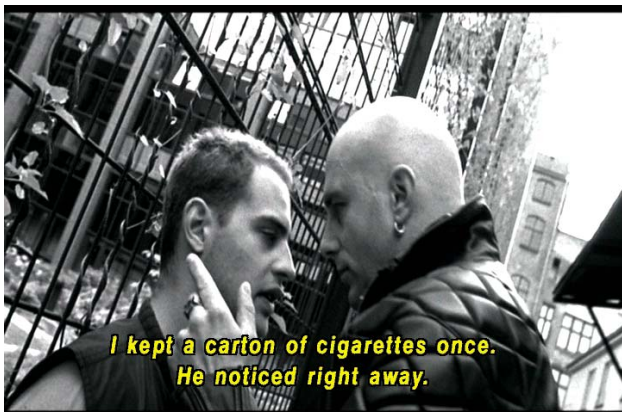
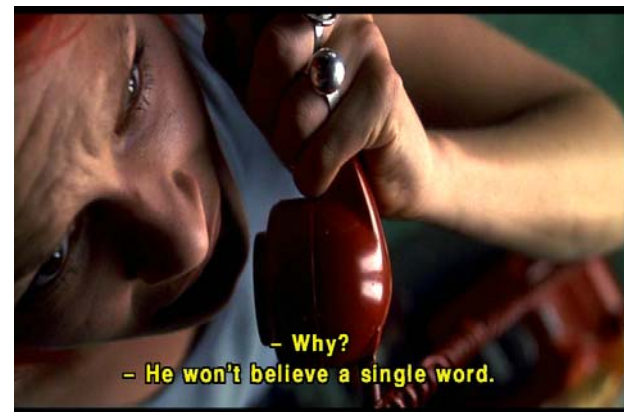


These shots reveal the suspicious appearance and lifestyle of Manni – as in being scared of inspectors and running away instinctively. It also reveals his world view – assuming the “bum” will do as Manni would do, that is, go on a holiday with the money. The film goes on to show that the bum does not have such an attitude towards the money.





Then we see the stereotyped criminal boss – the mean, bald man. That is juxtaposed with the comment by Manni that Lola would eventually not know what to do – indicating a sense of inferiority for Manni.



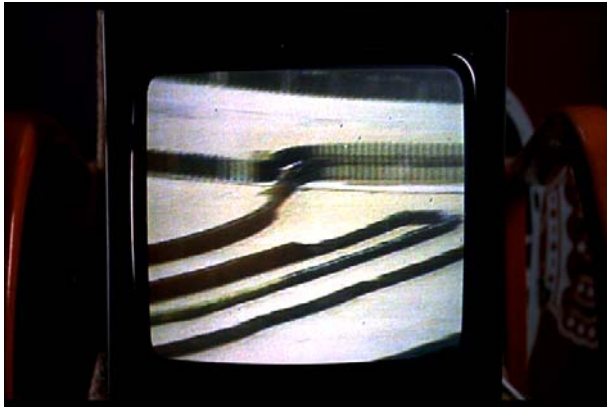


Thus the central conceit is launched – 20 minutes. We also see the first time Lola shatters a symbol of vulnerability – glass. The scream represents a primal response to the situation.



We then see some very brief images of the life of Lola – the love of her and Manni, the clinging to childhood represented with the dolls and the connection to nature with the tortoise.





The Phone is foregrounded and the chase is established. Lola's stress is represented through a variety of camera angles showing her the possibilities. As is another motif – that of life as a game of chance. The poker-machine style checklist of Lola's sources of cash is an important concept. The appearance of an animated figure who looks like the casino croupier emphasises the "chance" element. The fortune motif is reinforced with the mother's interest in astrology.





## First Play







### The Photographic Speculations – “And Then”

The Photographic Speculations ask the audience to use their knowledge of signs and signifiers to fill in the gaps of the possible stories shown. Here we have the first future storyline for the mother with the pram. It's an unhappy end, with hints about alcohol, bad parenting, then child abduction. Students could take these images as a springboard to texts related to parenting. The first time we see Lola's father with Jutta Hansen, it's cold, but with some hope. Note the grainy filter – it makes these sections look like German soap opera. Each of these scenes do run as generic soap opera scenes, due to the traditional, conservative camera angles and dialogue. This use of conventions help to show just how different the rest of the film is.





The Bike Boy makes his first appearance – his story has a bad beginning, with a happy ending, demonstrating that a negative event does not necessarily have a bad end.



The car crash proves that no matter what else happens, some things are inevitable. This time, it's a car crash. We also see that the bum hasn't taken off to Australia with the money, indicating that he is not as sure about his dreams, philosophies and desires as Manni.



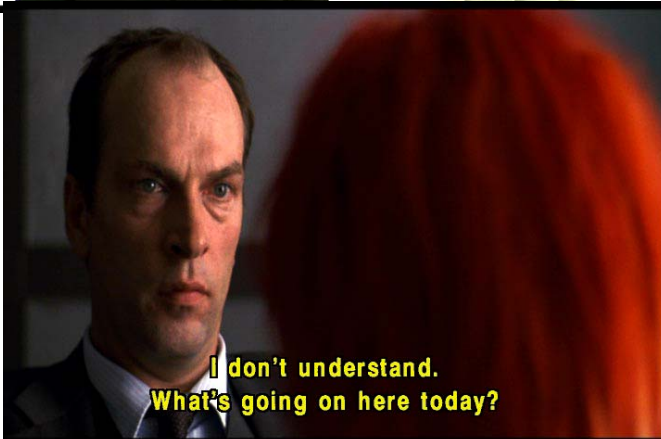
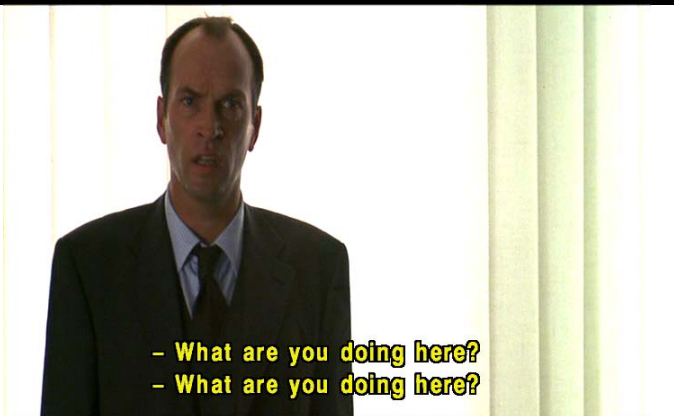
The first storyline of the bank woman is also not positive in the slightest. It's very gloomy and depressing, which could lead to other related texts on death and its representation.



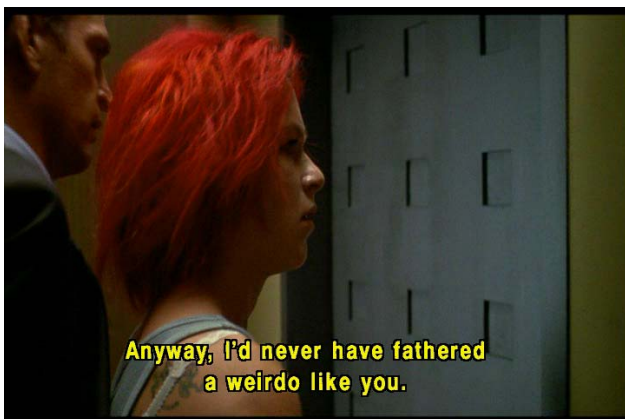
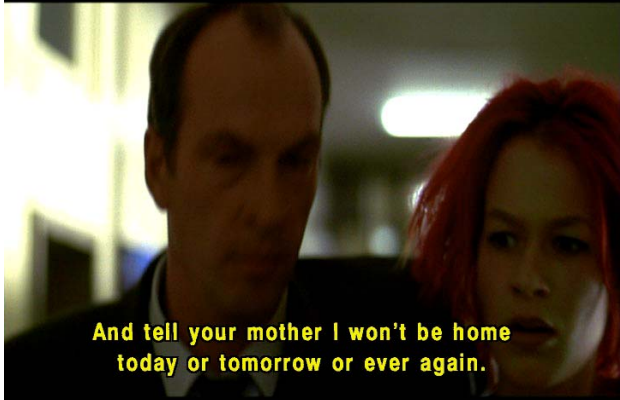
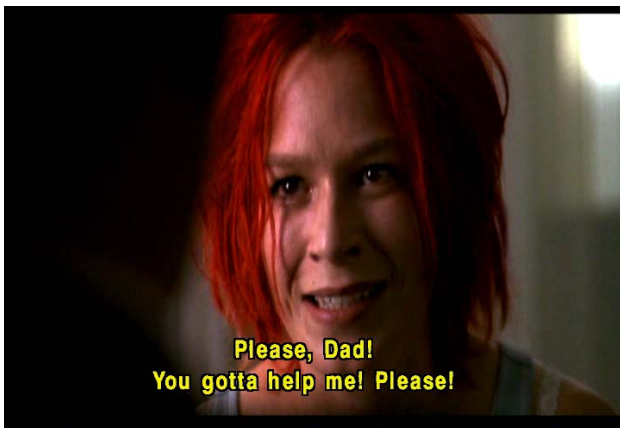


Following this, we have the first confrontation between Lola and her father. In this confrontation, we see the nature of the relationship. There is the overwhelming impression that the father's job has caused a break in the relationship of his family, to the extent that he loathes his daughter.

This confrontation shows that extreme events can bring such issues to a head.







The devastation is etched in the face and physical actions of Lola. Also, note the shattering of the symbolic glass clock. The film, however, doesn't stop – but still gives the response of Lola time to show. It is with this devastation that we continue to the first end game. Note that Lola isn't as all-knowing as she may appear, especially with a gun. Also, note the constant cutting in of the clock motif, heightening the tension for the audience and the characters.

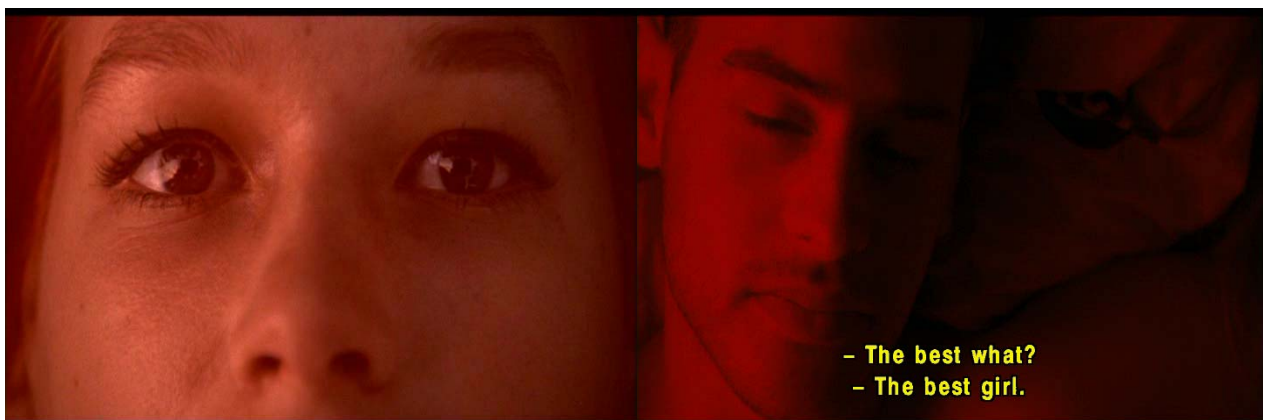




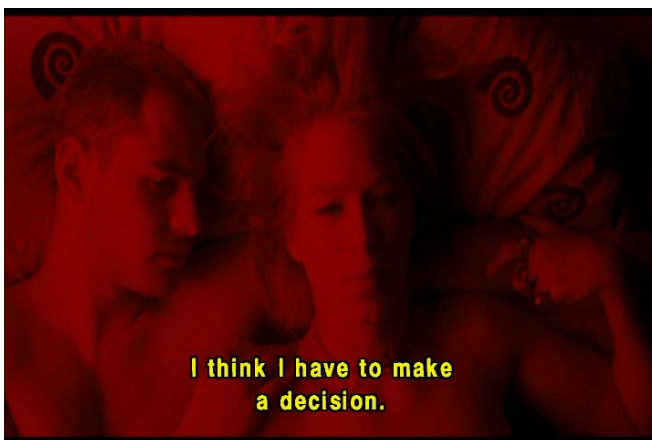
The film makes sure we see the reaction of people who accidentally kill Lola, then Manni. Note the oversized hat on an unlikely-looking police officer.

### Death Reflection 1

This reflection is based on the fears of Lola – that there is a better girl out there and that Manni will find that girl. Manni believes she is “nuts” for her paranoia. The finish – that a decision must be made, takes us to the decision that she is going to be strong and we are going into the second segment. It is at this point that the audience realises that this film is not a standard crime-gone-wrong tale. Note that the filter is the red of blood, death, passion.







## Second Play

There's a more negative start to this repeat, with the boy tripping Lola. This negativity, however, is not applying to everyone. The mother is a beneficiary of the film's chance/fortune motif. The Bike Boy, however, is not so lucky. The signifiers in his case points to a dark side of male identity.



It would be a good idea for students to contrast this photograph scenario with the first one.



The Father/Jutta relationship is following the generally negative tone of this playing. This time the soap opera is exploring the idea of a split caused by the pregnancy. It is also telling that time around, Lola is taking a more aggressive stance with her father. She is also better with a gun.



In a humorous twist, Twyker inserts an amusing and romantic interlude between two bankers.



The scene outside the bank breaks the tension caused in the previous scene, with an amusing comment on gender stereotyping.



## Death 2

This twist gave this repeat an unexpected path to a happier ending, however, fate/chance and the glass motif reappear to kill Manni this time and cause him to reflect. His concern is that Lola will mourn him but will eventually find someone who will cater to her needs.







### Third Play

This is a more empowered repeat from the outset – Lola barking back at the dog, as well as having an astounding leaping ability in the animation, hence demonstrating the advantages of using animation for this sequence. The mother takes a religious journey and Lola's father has a happy time with Jutta and no nasty or dramatic confrontation with Lola.





This time, however, we see more about the “bum” and his values. He seems happy to spend his money on simple things, such as food. His encounter with bike boy – that serendipity is mounting – shows us that the bum seems to just want to enjoy the breeze through his hair, rather than going overseas.



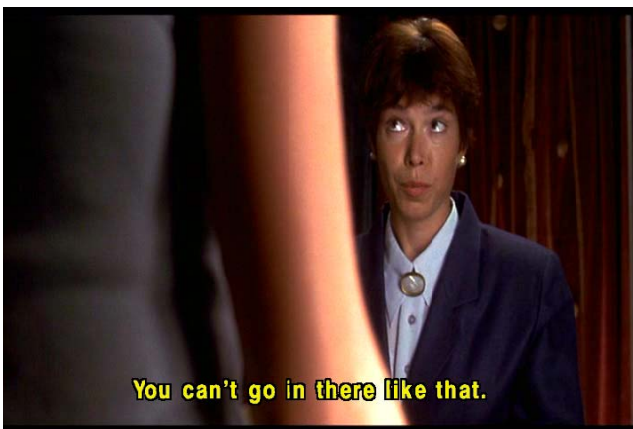
The values of a “bum” and the life he leads is also explored in this repeat. The confrontation with Manni reveals that he is not equipped with the ability to defend himself. The handing over of the gun is both an act of trust from Manni and a long term empowering moment – unfortunately enough – for the “bum”. The chase, in another Twyker piece of wizardry – causes the last car accident.





## The Casino

This repeat bring together the motifs of Lola's strength and determination of character; the number 20, shattering of glass and the concept of "game" and fortune and their roles in people's lives.



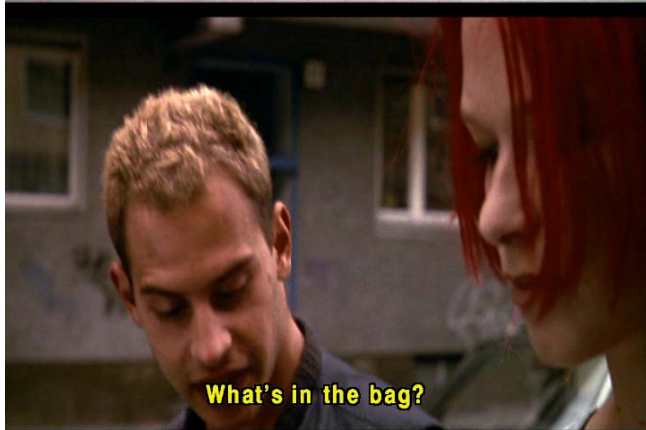


## The End







Just before the final denouement, where everything upholds the positive tone of this segment, we see a poignant moment between Lola and the security guard. Thus, there is to be a death, even in this playing – but there is a piece of real human pathos between the two people. This is a large contrast with the smug, patronizing contact in the first play and the tension of the robbery in the second play.

The we see the end, where chance and boldness has brought about the positive outcome for both Manni and Lola. This ending also raises questions about the future for Lola and her relationships with Manni and her father. At this stage, however, it's a happy ending.






# Themes of the Text




## Relationships – Romantic and Family

-  The two death scenes give Twyker the opportunity to explore the fears of the couple, in relation to their relationship with each other, pre and post death. Through both being relaxed and represented only with words and facial expressions, we are focused on the intimate messages they convey.
-  The scenes at the opening provide an insight into the control held by Lola in the relationship, with Manni being both passive and aggressive in his submissive role in the relationship. The confidence of Lola wavers but continues throughout the film.
-  The family relationship of Lola is also explored in the film, with her mother showing little interest in reaching out for her family, more interested in astrology (this helps to emphasise the fortune/fate motif). Lola's father is also tied to his job and a relationship there. The three playings of the scenario gives Twyker a chance to explore different perspectives on the fracturing of Lola's family and the creation of a new family by her father. These scenes would need to be closely examined and compared for their contrast.
-  The family life of the mother with the pram is also worth exploring, especially contrasting the impact of money with the impact of alcohol and neglect.

## Chance

-  Lola's three different interactions with her father provided three vastly different outcomes. Each produced three quite different visual reactions which could be explored.
-  Each of the "And then" scenarios reveal the role chance can play in the life of people. The still photographs provide the chance for the audience to analyse the signs that point to the type of lives people could lead outside the frame of the film.
-  Chance is a significant motif in the film, with chance events leading to very different conclusions in each repetition of the scenario. This can be related to theories about the role of chance in the life of humanity. If there is a particularly interested class, you could also look at Postmodern theory and the role of chance in contemporary society.

## Money

-  The role of money has played a role in the family life of Lola, with her father clearly frustrated when Lola suddenly shows an interest in his job only when she needs money.
-  It is also a crucial element of the criminal lives of Manni and Lola – they see it as a way of achieving power in the underworld, climbing the ladder.
-  For the "bum", money is still foreign to his existence, which explains why he is happy to buy a bike and ride around with his new wealth, rather than do as Manni feared and go on an expensive trip.



- ❖ Money is also a passport to the kind of glamorous existence symbolised by the casino. Through using a casino, Twyker is drawing upon a cultural memory of casino films in history – Bond films, etc.

## Courage / Resilience



- ❖ Lola is the main embodiment of courage in the film. Her constant belief that she can help Manni out of his troubles drives the film. The courage is particularly emphasised in the casino scene, where she is a force of nature that the entire casino cannot stop, despite her disturbance of its rules and traditions. The many cuts of Lola driving forward, the close-ups confirm in the viewer the idea of an inner courage keeping her going, no matter what.
- ❖ Lola's father also has to face the concept of courage in each time he faces the prospect of Jutta's pregnancy.
- ❖ Manni is also an important study of courage – he lacks it at the start; he expects Lola to possess the courage. The close ups of his anguish demonstrate this lack of courage in the face of possible violence.

## Motifs






- ❖ **Clocks / Time.** Central, ruling motif overlooking the entire film, especially at the end of each reprise of the action. Its tyranny is especially acute in the world of criminals – Manni and Lola (and the audience) are aware of the importance of appearing on time during any crime-related meeting. The appearance of clocks is a constant feature and their increased presence before the end of each repeat increase the tension.
- ❖ **Glass.** The ability of Lola to shatter glass indicate her stress and as well as the force of her vigour and energy. Glass is seen as a symbol of vulnerability – especially when it is tested by the force of nature that is Lola. It is telling that she shatters her father's glass clock – combining two motifs as well as the expensive wine glasses of the patrons of the casino – acting as a symbolic shattering of their world. The old film cliché of the workmen carrying glass is also used as a part of this motif. It could be seen that the role of this glass contributed to the death of Manni at the end of the second playing.
- ❖ **Red.** This colour of fire, passion, war, danger acts as a reflection of the situation and the heightened passions. It is a deliberate tool, used to especially good use at the end of the first two plays – we see the departure into the red zone, then the appearance of the red money bag and finally the phone signalling the next playing of the scenario.
- ❖ **Running.** Lola is often running, indicating speed and motion. She's also running from right to left at the start, suggesting a run to her past, embodied in her father. The fact Manni can even chase a bike-riding "bum" indicates both how unfamiliar the bike is to him and the desperation of Manni.

# Some Techniques and their Effect on Meaning




## 1. Repetition

-  Allows the audience to reflect on the possibilities of different lives, depending on different events and chance.
-  Allows the composer to present different life paths of various characters, both inside and outside the frame of the film.




## 2. Jump Cuts

-  Increases the frenetic pace of the film.
-  Makes the film look more like a contemporary music video, an accepted and popular art form.
-  Takes responders out of a sense of realistic flow of events, placing more control in the hands of the composer.
-  Makes it possible to fit more suggestions, concepts and signs into a shorter time frame.
-  Tells a story in a more direct, blunt fashion, emphasising the milieu of the film.








## 3. Music

-  The frenetic, upbeat music makes it appear more like a music video.
-  Increases the tempo of the film.
-  Distracts audience members from the many minutes taken up with Lola running.

## 4. Filters / Cameras

-  The grainy look of the scenes in the bank (which don't include Lola) separate the human drama of those scenes with the slick look of the running and chase scenes outside.
-  The red filter of the death scenes link those scenes with the red of blood and death.
-  The vibrancy of colour is a visual signature in the film. It's a bright, vibrant city (except for the bank) and the red repetition tops it off.

## 5. Use of Known Genres / Cliches

-  Cuts down time by using signifiers and concepts from accepted genres:
-  Soap opera (the affair)
-  The Heist / Criminal Film
-  Race Against Time
-  The Casino
-  The Supermarket / Bank Robbery
-  That way, Twyker can explore a variety of ideas that spring from those well-known genres in a shorter, more effective space.






## Possible Assessment Task

### Module A: Distinctively Visual



Viewing / Representing 15%

#### *Run, Lola, Run Website*




You are to create a website centred around Run, Lola, Run. It must include the following elements:

-  A portal that illustrates the basic elements of the film.
-  Two pages about two different themes of the film, with discussion of how visual features of key scenes contribute to the meaning of the text for audiences.
-  A page exploring a concept expressed in one of the Photographic Speculations.

And ONE of the following:

-  A page explaining and exploring the construction of the film, focusing on its structure and use of other film features.
-  A blog, discussing your views about one particular aspect of the film, such as its popularity, its structure, its visual style, the music.

In your assessment task, you will be assessed on how well you:

-  Analyse the visual features used to represent ideas
-  Speculate how audiences would respond to the text
-  Discuss how the film text type communicates message through its medium.

**Outcomes Assessed 4, 5, 9, 10**